

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT TOM HORNE TODAY RELEASED DATA FROM THE FALL 2005 AIMS TEST

PHOENIX (Tuesday, December 20, 2005) -- Arizona Schools Chief Tom Horne today released the high school fall AIMS test results. The class of 2006 is the first class that has to pass the AIMS test to graduate. This is the fourth time the class of 2006 has taken the AIMS test, and they will have a fifth opportunity in the spring of 2006. 3,700 additional students passed all three tests as a result of the fall 2005 test.

Horne explained: "We have focused considerable energies on dropout prevention, and since I took office, the graduation rate has increased from 72.7 percent to 76.8 percent. The three year average is 74.5 percent. In the meantime, the public is interested in what percentage of students, who would have graduated in the absence of a high-stakes test, has passed all three tests.

"The 74.5 percent three-year average for the graduation rate is based on a freshman cohort of 71,600 students. Using those historical figures, we would expect 53,300 to graduate in the absence of a high-stakes test. As of last spring, 39,700 students passed, and this fall, that increased to 43,400 students. If the same number passes on the 5th try, that would be approximately 90 percent of the students who would have graduated in the absence of a high-stakes test.

"In addition, based on a sampling of students in Mesa, there was an estimate that about 20 percent of students not passing would be helped by augmentation. If that bears out statewide, then the number graduating will be approximately 95 percent of those who would have graduated in the absence of a high-stakes test.

"This projection is highly uncertain until we see what happens in the spring. It does appear probable that at least 90 percent of those who would have graduated in the absence of a high-stakes test will, in fact, graduate.

"The key will be to do everything possible to encourage those who have not yet passed to take advantage of free tutoring available through the state. 90 percent of those who took tutoring

last year either reached proficiency or moved from falls far below to approaches. This proves that the tutoring works, and that the key is to reach those students who have not yet taken advantage of the tutoring that is offered.”

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